[English]

Oil Import

869. SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA :
SHRI SYDAIAH KOTA :
SHRI SATYAJITSINH DULIPSINH GAEKWAD :

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Forex loses mount with archaic oil import norms" appearing in the *Indian Express* dated June 10, 1997;

(b) if so, the facts of the matter reported therein; and

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to update and modify the procurement procedures adopted in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) IOC, the sole canalising agency, organises imports of crude oil and petroleum products as per the Oil Economic Budget approved by Government.

Import of crude oil is arranged by IOC through term contracts with National Oil Companies of oil producing countries having exportable surplus. These purchases are made at the official selling price prevailing for the month of loading. Balance requirements are purchased through international competitive tenders from parties registered with IOC based on economic/commercial considerations.

Import of petroleum products is arranged partly through term contracts with National Oil Companies of oil producing countries having exportable surplus and partly through international tenders from registered parties. Efforts are always made to source maximum requirements through such term contracts. The balance requirements are met through term tenders/monthly tenders from registered parties.

The purchases through tenders are made with approval of empowered Standing Committee and in accordance with the procedure set up by ESC.

(c) In view of the complexity and changing pattern of oil trades in the international market, it has been decided to review the existing purchase system through a reputed international consultant so as to ensure that the best purchase practices followed in the international market are adopted by IOC. M/s. Arthur Anderson have been appointed as consultant for this purpose by IOC to review existing system of purchase etc. and make recommendations based on practices generally followed in the Oil Industry, so as to upgrade the system to international standards.

[Translation]

Maintenance of N.Hs.

870. PROF. PREM SINGH CHANDUMAJRA :
SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY :
SHRIMATI KETAKI DEVI SINGH :
JUSTICE GUMAN MAL LODHA :

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether National Highways in country are in a dilapildated condition for want of proper maintenance;

(b) if so, the opinion of the Government in this regard and the reasons for not having proper arrangements of maintenance;

(c) whether the Government have formulated any action plan at national level for keeping the national highways in good condition;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) to (e) The overall availability of funds for the maintenance and repairs of National Highways is of the order of 50% of the requirement as per approved norms. However, efforts are being made to maintain the National Highways in a traffic-worthy condition round the year within the available funds.

Repairing of Muzaffarpur-Raxsaul N.H.

871. SHRI RADHA MOHAN SINGH : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Muzaffarpur-Raxsaul National Highway, the main road leading to Nepal is in a damaged condition due to which accidents have been occurring on this road; and

(b) if so, the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government for repairing this National Highway?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) No, Sir. However, due to incessant rain since last fortnight, some pot holes have developed which are being attended to and the traffic is flowing.

(b) National Highways are being kept in traffic worthy condition within available resources.

Agreement between India and U.S.A

872. SHRI MAHENDRA SINGH BHATI : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether any agreement has been signed between India and U.S.A. recently in the field of Transport;

(b) if so, the terms and conditions of this agreement; and

(c) the date from which this agreement is likely to be effected?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) to (c) The Government of India and the Department of Transportation USA, have signed a Memorandum of Intent to identify the objectives of a possible agreement on collaboration between the two countries in transportation, science and technology.

Relaxation in Income-Tax for Private Sector

873. SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have decided to provide relaxation in income tax on investment made in road construction section in order to encourage private sector participation;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the date from which the above decision is likely to be made effective?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Under Section 80(1)(A) of the Income-Tax Act entrepreneurs operating infrastructure facilities which include roads, have been given:—

(i) 100% income-tax exemption on profits for the five years.

(ii) 30% income-tax concession on profits thereafter for the next five years.

(iii) Such deduction to run for a continuous period of 10 years out of 12 fiscal years at the assessee's choice after starting of the facility.

(iv) 40% of the profit from infrastructure deductible under Section 36(i)(viii) of the aforesaid Act for financial institutions providing long term finance to defined infrastructure sector including roads.

(c) These have already been made effective.

[English]

Airport at Raichur in Karnataka

874. SHRI RAJA RANGAPPA NAIK : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Airport Authority of India have surveyed for opening of airport at Raichur in Karnataka recently:

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The feasibility study carried out by Airports Authority of India (AAI) team has indicated that a runway of dimensions 4500 ft. × 150 ft. can be constructed for operation of 50 seater aircraft. This airport belongs to the Government of Karnataka and it is for the State Government to take up the upgradation of the airport.

[Translation]

Striking Down of Appeal

875. SHRI SHANTILAL PARSOTAMDAS PATEL :
SHRI RADHA MOHAN SINGH :

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the newsitem captioned "Kendriya Vidyalayon mein vivekadhin kote sey daakhile ke appeal Khaarij" appearing in the Hindi daily 'Jansatta' dated April 17, 1997; and

(b) if so, the facts thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MUHI RAM SAIKIA): (a) Yes, Sir.